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The text followed is that of the first edition of 1583, and the spelling of the original is retained. In appendices are given references to later editions, and extracts from the *Description of England*, by Harrison, between whom and Sir Thomas there were mutual borrowings.

The care with which the original text is reproduced and the critical apparatus furnished in the introduction and appendices would seem to render this a definitive edition of the work.

New England Town Law: A Digest of Statutes and Decisions Concerning Towns and Town Officers. By JAMES S. GARLAND. (Boston: The Boston Book Company. 1906. Pp. xxxi, 894.)

As its title indicates the main body of this work is a digest of statutes and judicial decisions intended, primarily, for practicing lawyers and public officials. The law in each of the six New England States is printed and paged separately. But a uniform system of headings, arranged alphabetically from assessors to weights and measures, permits an easy comparison of the established provisions in the different States, which is further aided by a common index to the whole volume. This method of arrangement serves to make the volume of no little value also to students of political science, as a work of reference and collection of materials on this important branch of American local government.

A general introduction of eighty-three pages and brief introductions to the sections on each State add still further to the value of the book to the general reader interested in the New England towns either in their historical or present day aspects. In the general introduction free use has been made of local histories and historical monographs, and this adds a good deal to the summary of the existing law. But this part of the work falls short of being what it might have been made—in itself a careful, systematic discussion of the New England town as a living political institution. This is indicated at first glance by the fact that the long introduction is not clearly marked off into divisions, and although the page headings show a succession of topics these are by no means well classified. But the greatest weakness is the fact that, apart from the historical material, the language is that of the legal digest. There are few broad

statements summarizing general tendencies, almost no illustrations from the actual practices of government and no attempt at literary presentation, so that this part of the book also is of value mainly as a source of material for a scientific study of the subject.

It goes without saying that such a work of this scope contains much information that has hitherto escaped the notice of previous writers; and one or two items of significance may here be noted: The largest town in New England governed under the town meeting system is Brookline, Mass. It has a population of 24,000, 6600 assessed polls, and 4000 registered voters. The assessed valuation of property is more than \$90,000,000, and the total expenditures for 1905 were over \$1,750,000. But as it is now impossible for all voters to attend the town meeting, the legislation a few years ago provided for a referendum upon petition, from the decisions of the town meeting.

Illustrations of control by the higher authorities over the actions of the town meeting are to be seen in the necessity for the approval of town by-laws. In Massachusetts, town by-laws do not go into effect unless approved by the attorney-general of the commonwealth. In Maine they must be approved by the county commissioners or a judge of the supreme judicial court.

It is surprising to learn that in New Hampshire the annual town meeting has disappeared, and regular meetings are now held only biennially.

At the end of the introduction there is a brief statement in reference to the extension of the town system in the Middle West and Northwest. Here the author evidently assumes that the town has the same virility and significance as in New England. While established by law, the town is in fact of much less importance in these States; and the county is the important center of political activity and local administration. Mr. Garland is more clearly mistaken in speaking of the town as established in the States of the Pacific slope—being perhaps misled by the use of the term township for the justices' district in California, and an unused law authorizing the creation of townships in the State of Washington. Indeed, the westward movement of the town meeting seems to have stopped with the arid plains; and there is as yet no indication of its extension to the States beyond.

JOHN A. FAIRLIE.